

Claim Listing:

Claims 1-44 (Cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) Procedure for etching a sample, said sample comprising a material and having a surface, by focussed electron beam induced chemical reaction at said surface and in a portion of said material, comprising the steps of:

a. providing an electron beam column capable of generating a focussed electron beam,

b. feeding, in a vacuum atmosphere, molecules of a reaction gas to said surface of said sample,

c. irradiating said surface, said portion of material of said sample to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas in said vacuum atmosphere with at least one first beam of electrons; said surface, said portion of said material to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas undergo a ~~chemical~~ chemical reaction forming a reaction product which is not gaseous and not volatile, said reaction product having a vaporisation temperature and a sublimation temperature, and

d. irradiating said reaction product with a second electron beam which heats said reaction product and said material locally above at least one of said vaporisation temperature and said sublimation temperature to remove said reaction product from said surface.

46. (Currently amended) Procedure for etching a sample, said sample comprising a

material and having a surface, by focussed electron beam induced chemical reaction at said surface and in a portion of said material, comprising the steps of:

a. providing an electron beam column capable of generating a focussed electron beam,

b. feeding, in a vacuum atmosphere, molecules of a reaction gas to said surface of said sample,

c. irradiating said surface, said portion of material of said sample to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas in said vacuum atmosphere with at least one first beam of electrons; said surface, said portion of said material to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas undergo a ~~chemical~~ chemical reaction forming a reaction product which is not gaseous and not volatile, said reaction product having a vaporisation temperature and a sublimation temperature, and

d. irradiating said reaction product with a second electron beam which heats said reaction product and said material locally above at least one of said vaporisation temperature and said sublimation temperature to remove said reaction product from said surface; wherein said first electron beam and said second electron beam are generated by different settings of ~~said~~ the same electron beam column.

47. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 46, wherein said electron beam column comprises several beam limiting apertures and wherein said different settings of said electron beam column are created by passing said electron beam column through

different ones of said several beam limiting apertures.

48. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 47, wherein a selection between individual ones of said several beam limiting apertures is performed electrically by deflection fields.

49. (Currently Amended) Procedure for etching a sample, said sample comprising a material and having a surface, by focussed electron beam induced chemical reaction at said surface and in a portion of said material, comprising the steps of:

a. providing an electron beam column capable of generating a focussed electron beam,

b. feeding, in a vacuum atmosphere, molecules of a reaction gas to said surface of said sample,

c. irradiating said surface, said portion of material of said sample to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas in said vacuum atmosphere with at least one first beam of electrons; said surface, said portion of said material to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas undergo a ~~chemical~~ chemical reaction forming a reaction product which is not gaseous and not volatile, said reaction product having a vaporisation temperature and a sublimation temperature,

d. irradiating said reaction product with a second electron beam which heats said reaction product and said material locally above at least one of said vaporisation temperature and said sublimation temperature to remove said reaction product from said

surface; wherein said second beam of electrons has a higher intensity than said first beam of electrons.

50. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 49, wherein said second electron beam provides an electron current in the range between 1 and 20 nA.

51. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 50, wherein said electron beam column comprises several beam limiting apertures and wherein different settings of said electron beam column are created by passing said electron beam column through different ones of said several beam limiting apertures.

52. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 51, wherein a selection between individual ones of said several beam limiting apertures is performed electrically by deflection fields.

53. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 49, wherein said first electron beam is irradiated to said surface of said sample in a focussed manner and wherein said second beam of electrons is irradiated to said surface of said sample in a defocused manner compared to said focussing of said first electron beam.

54. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 53, wherein said electron beam column comprises several beam limiting apertures and wherein in different settings of said electron beam column are created by passing electron beam column through different ones of said several beam limiting apertures.

55. (Previously presented) Procedure of claim 54, wherein a selection between

individual ones of said several apertures is performed electrically by deflection fields.

56. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 55, wherein said second electron beam provides an electron current in the range between 1 and 20 nA.

57. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 45 wherein said second beam of electrons is generated in a pulsed and/or focussed way.

58. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 46 wherein said second beam of electrons is generated in a pulsed and/or focussed way.

59. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 49 wherein said second beam of electrons is generated in a pulsed and/or focussed way.

60. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 45 wherein said surface of said sample to be etched is initially cleaned by thermal desorption with electron beam heating.

61. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 46 wherein said surface of said sample to be etched is initially cleaned by thermal desorption with electron beam heating.

62. (Previously presented) Procedure according to claim 49 wherein said surface of said sample to be etched is initially cleaned by thermal desorption with electron beam heating.

63. (Currently Amended) Procedure according to claim 45 wherein said surface of said sample has carbon contamination thereon and further comprising the step of

reacting excited halogen atoms released by a beam of molecules comprising water, hydrogen peroxide, chlorine and other halogen compounds with said carbon contamination to effect cleaning of said surface of said sample, said step of reacting is performed before said step of providing an electron beam column capable of generating a focussed electron beam.

64. (Currently Amended) Procedure according to claim 45 wherein said surface of said sample has silicon oxide contamination thereon and further comprising the step of reacting excited halogen atoms released by a beam of molecules comprising chlorine or other halogen compounds with said silicon oxide contamination under irradiation with a third electron beam to effect cleaning of said surface of said sample, said third electron beam generated ~~is~~ with a different aperture setting over said first and second beams of electrons, said step of reacting is performed before said step of providing an electron beam column capable of generating a focussed electron beam.

65. (Currently Amended) Procedure according to claim ~~63~~ 64 comprising a fourth beam of electrons and wherein a second reaction product is formed by said reaction between said ~~carbon~~ silicon oxide contamination and said beam of molecules which is not gaseous and which is not volatile is evaporated by heating with said fourth beam of electrons to heat said surface of said sample to a temperature above the vaporization temperature of said second reaction product, said fourth electron beam generated in a different aperture setting over said first and second beams of electrons.

66. (Previously Presented) Procedure according to claim 45 wherein said molecules of said reaction gas include selected chemical compounds in a stoichiometric composition issued from a gas feeding system to said surface of said sample during said step of irradiating said surface, said portion of material of said sample to be etched, and said molecules of said reaction gas in said vacuum atmosphere with said at least one first beam of electrons.

67. (Previously Presented) Procedure according to claim 45 wherein said molecules of said reaction gas are issued with a multi-jet supply to enhance the reaction.

68. (Currently Amended) Procedure for etching a sample, said sample comprising a material and having a surface, by focussed electron beam induced chemical reaction at said surface and in a portion of said material, comprising the steps of:

- a. providing an electron beam column capable of generating a plurality of focussed electron beams using different apertures;

- b. heating said sample with a first electron beam ~~with~~ to clean said surface of said sample and desorb adsorbates;

- c. generating adsorption sites for molecules of a reaction gas with a second electron beam scan;

- d. feeding, in a vacuum atmosphere, molecules of a reaction gas to said surface of said sample,

- e. irradiating said surface, said portion of material of said sample to be etched and

said molecules of said reaction gas in said vacuum atmosphere with at least one third beam of electrons; said surface, said portion of said material to be etched and said molecules of said reaction gas undergo a ~~chemical~~ chemical reaction forming a reaction product which is not gaseous and not volatile, said reaction product having a vaporisation temperature and a sublimation temperature; and

f. irradiating said reaction product with a fourth electron beam which is a pulsed ~~high~~ power beam which heats said reaction product and said material locally above at least one of said vaporisation temperature and said sublimation temperature to remove said reaction products from said surface; wherein said first, said second and said third electron beams are generated by different settings of ~~said~~ the same electron beam column.